

Ned Blip

by

Mark Shigaki

blipstrip@yahoo.com

"NED BLIP" is a comic strip work-in-progress about a man out of step with the rest of humanity.

Because of my limitations as an artist, I've put the greater part of my efforts into developing scripts for this strip. Below can be found a few random samples. I realize that these wouldn't have the impact of an illustrated, finished product. But I would still greatly appreciate feedback. Thanks.

Mark Shigaki blipstrip@yahoo.com

04/26/06

The cast:

NED BLIP: Age 25. A dreamer whose skewed view of reality often shocks and confuses his more conventional family and friends. Married to his high school sweetheart Kelly.

KELLY BLIP: Age 25. Brainy, philosophical, long-suffering wife of Ned. Tends to over-think things.

RASH VENEER: Age 25. Ned's best friend. Troublemaking horndog with a major Audrey obsession.

AUDREY DOTT: Age 23. Kelly's best friend. Veteran beauty pageant contestant and aspiring supermodel. Often finds herself having to fend off Rash's advances.

KAFKA-BOOM-DEE-AY!

Panel 1: Ned and Kelly sit for dinner at a restaurant table.

KELLY: Ned, when you said this café is reminiscent of an exotic foreign novel...

Panel 2: Closeup of Kelly staring down at her coffee mug, a large cockroach on its rim.

KELLY: [DEADPAN] ...the name 'Kafka' didn't exactly spring to mind.

Panel 3: Ned is cheerily oblivious to Kelly's sarcasm, interpreting her words in a more positive light.

NED: [WIDE GRIN] Has our evening then 'metamorphosed' into something special?

KELLY: [LOOKING DRAINED] It's more a trial in the face of oppression.

Panel 4: Ned is puzzled. Kelly looks down at dish set before her.

NED: What's oppressive?

KELLY: This tuna salad. It threatens to rob me of my inalienable right to NOT die from salmonella poisoning.

Panel 5: Closeup of Ned, rubbing his chin in thought.

NED: I can imagine what Kafka would do under the threat of oppression.

Panel 6: In this panel, we see Ned's fantasy of Kafka doing a dance routine in the manner of Michigan J. Frog.

KAFKA: #Hello my baby,
Hello my honey,
Hello my ragtime gal...#

Panel 7: Eyes closed, Ned grins in pleasure at the image. Kelly eyes him narrowly.

NED: WORK IT, KAFKA BABY!

KELLY: Not quite the Kafka scholar, are you?

WHOM TO SAVE?

Panel 1: Kelly reads aloud from a book of questions. Ned listens intently.

KELLY: "A man, a woman, and a child are drowning in a lake."

Panel 2:

KELLY: "If you could save just one, whom would you choose?"

Panel 3: This is a question Ned feels unqualified to answer.

NED: No soap, Kell. I can't swim.

KELLY: This is hypothetical, Ned. Let's suppose you CAN.

Panel 4: Having it explained to him, Ned sees this as an opportunity to fulfill a fantasy at the same time.

NED: Cool! Can I also have on gold lame speedos and swimming goggles?

KELLY: [ROLLS EYES] Whatever.

Panel 5: Magically, Kelly finds a now goggles-wearing Ned relaxing in a hot tub with a woman and a large pitcher.

KELLY: Wh...What's this??!

Panel 6: Ned pours himself a drink.

NED: I'm supposing the lake is a hot tub, the woman Maria Sharapova, and the child a pitcher of sangria.

Panel 7: Kelly eyes Ned narrowly.

KELLY: What about the drowning man?

NED: [SIGNALS FOR WAITER] Ah, yes. Garçon?

Panel 8: A waiter appears. Ned is now shown reading a menu.

NED: Bring me...let's see...the drowning man.

WAITER: Excellent choice, sir.

Panel 9: Waiter returns with gagging, drenched man. Kelly is dumb-founded.

NED: Looks like I save the MAN.

COMMITMENT

Panel 1: Ned and Rash walk together in the open air, talking.

NED: How was your date last night with that checkout girl?

RASH: It seemed to go well.

Panel 2:

RASH: But something told me it just wasn't gonna work out.

NED: Lemme guess. Was that something...

Panel 3: Ned's words continue in a narrative box at the top of panel 3. Below, we see Ned's depiction of what must have happened the night before: Rash sits at a restaurant table while his date, having risen from her chair, bids a not-so-fond farewell.

[NED]: *...her voice?*

RASH'S DATE: This just isn't gonna work out.

Panel 4: We return to Ned and Rash in the present.

NED: Face it, Rash. The closest thing you have to a relationship is a cardboard standup of Jessica Alba.

RASH: Aww, I had to trash that.

Panel 5: Expecting the worst, Ned tightly covers his ears.

RASH: She was gettin' kinda...

NED: I don't wanna know!!!

Panel 6:

RASH: Maybe I'm just waitin' for the right sort of babe.

NED: [ROLLING EYES] What sort is that?

Panel 7:

RASH: [PROUDLY] Audrey Dott.

Panel 8: A loud shriek covers the entire panel.

[VOICE]: SHRIEEEEEK!!!

Panel 9: Change of scene: Kelly and Audrey sit at a restaurant table eating lunch. The shriek had come from Audrey, having in some way sensed Rash's words. Kelly, fingers plugging her ears, winces.

KELLY: Is the calamari THAT bad?

AUDREY: I suddenly just got this chill up my spine.

DEFINING MOMENTS

Panel 1: Sunglasses on, Ned relaxes on a lawn chair with a lemonade.

NED: "A man, a plan, a lawn chair--a tan!"

Panel 2: Clothes stained from gardening, a smiling Kelly approaches Ned offering a rake.

KELLY: *There's nothing like the tan--
of a leaf-rakin' man.*

Panel 3: Having risen from his chair, Ned starts to walk off.

NED: Rake leaves? Well I'll be seeing ya.

KELLY: Where do you think you're going?!

Panel 4: Ned stops, turns toward Kelly, and raises an index finger.

NED: "rake *noun* a dissolute man, roue."

Panel 5:

NED: "leave *verb* to go away from [to
leave a house]."

Panel 6: Waving goodbye, a sunny Ned departs.

NED: So ta ta, toots! I'm off to swill away
the hours in unabashed debauchery.

Panel 7: Kelly, eyes downcast, stands motionless with rake at her side.

KELLY: "rake *verb* to use a rake to level..."

Panel 8: In this panel, an irate Kelly now wields the rake as if about to strike Ned down, ie. level him. Ned shrinks in fear.

KELLY: ...A *DISSOLUTE MAN!!!*"

NED: ACK!

Panel 9: Some time later. In foreground, we find a sunglasses-wearing Kelly relaxing on Ned's lawn chair with a lemonade. Ned can be seen in background raking the lawn.

KELLY: "leave *noun* time off from active duty."

THE ARTIST

Panel 1: Feeling his talents unappreciated, a smock-wearing Ned longs for recognition in the art world.

NED: There must be some way for a creatively bankrupt artist with a vision to finagle the adulation he so richly deserves.

Panel 2: Ned leans towards Kelly and speaks from the side of his mouth, as if sharing a secret.

NED: They say fame is a door which unlocks the key to obscurity.

KELLY: Who are "they"? And why are they off their meds?

Panel 3: Closeup of Ned standing an egg on his open palm.

NED: Look at this egg; it's staid perfection a sad anachronism in the light of more recent movements in art.

Panel 4: Ned smashes the egg onto a small canvas resting on a table.

NED: The modernist breaks down such outmoded constructs...

Panel 5: Ned mixes the egg with his fingers.

NED: ...only to reassemble the fragments into a form more in tune with the zeitgeist.

Panel 6: Ned proudly displays the canvas with its dripping mess as a new work of art. Kelly is unimpressed.

NED: I call this piece: "Tempura Tantrum". What do you think?

KELLY: I think someone in this room wouldn't know art from a hole in the wall.

Panel 7: Ned turns and stares at the wall behind them.

Panel 8: Some time later. Sledgehammer in hand, Ned proudly shows off his latest work of art -- a large hole in the wall. A fuming Kelly, head in hand, locks her gaze on Ned's sledgehammer.

NED: A breakthrough!

KELLY: [GRITTING TEETH] And sure to go up in value following the artist's untimely death.

FAST AND FURIOUS

Panel 1: Audrey and Kelly sit together at a café table.

KELLY: [READING PAPER] Hmm, some group has organized a three-day fast against war.

Panel 2: Closeup of Audrey. Someone off-panel interrupts her.

AUDREY: A three day fast? For me that'd be so...

[OP VOICE]: ...business as usual?

Panel 3: It's Rash, who has interposed himself between Audrey and Kelly.

AUDREY: [ANNOYED] Tell you what, Rash. You lay off the model stereotypes...

Panel 4:

AUDREY: ...and I'll try not to pigeonhole slimeballs who crash tête-à-têtes involving Kelly and me.

Panel 5: Rash tries to correct what he takes to be a grammatical error.

RASH: You mean involving "Kelly and I".

Panel 6: Focus on Kelly and Rash. Kelly tries to correct Rash's mistake. Rash misunderstands.

KELLY: No, "me" is correct.

RASH: You mean "I am correct".

Panel 7: Kelly gets angry--but Rash thinks he's finally gotten through to her.

KELLY: Well, I AM correct!

RASH: There you go. Was that so hard?

Panel 8: Rash turns around and finds Audrey gone.

RASH: Now, about our date tonight, babe...er, babe?

Panel 9: As is Kelly. Rash stands with his back to the reader, scratching his head in puzzlement. On his back is taped a sign reading: "KICK I".

RASH: Now where'd they disappear to?

CARRIED AWAY

Panel 1: Ned asks a question of a preoccupied Kelly.

NED: Kell, remember the day you advised me to get my head examined?

KELLY: [READING MAGAZINE] Which one?

Panel 2:

NED: Well, I had Rash take me through hypnotic regression...

KELLY: Rash? He's no therapist. Why he barely even qualifies as human!

Panel 3:

NED: Funny you should say that. For I myself am not quite human.

KELLY: Excuse me?

Panel 4:

NED: It's true. I've recovered clear memories of being carried off by wolves as an infant and living amongst them to this day.

Panel 5: Amused, Kelly plays along.

KELLY: Well, you have seemed rather absent through all the years I've known you...

Panel 6:

KELLY: ...to think you were never actually here.

NED: Precisely.

Panel 7: Kelly attempts to reason with Ned.

KELLY: Here's a thought: Memory is pliable. It can alter, for example, through the manipulation of others.

NED: True, true.

Panel 8:

KELLY: Even seemingly 'age-old' recollections may be suspect, especially if they sound preposterous.

NED: I'm way ahead of you...

Panel 9:

NED: ...my wolf brothers explained all that to me AGES ago.

BENCH NOTION

Panel 1: Sitting on a park bench, Ned strikes up an uncharacteristically serious conversation with Kelly.

NED: Ever wonder what it would be like to be someone other than yourself?

Panel 2:

NED: A Tibetan monk, a New Jersey housewife...?

Panel 3:

NED: To inhabit a life and hold to beliefs totally foreign from your own?

Panel 4:

NED: Wouldn't this expose many of our own beliefs and notions of self as simply the products of an accident of birth?

Panel 5: Kelly begins her usual response to one of Ned's "insights". She stops herself mid-sentence when she realizes Ned may actually be making sense.

KELLY: That's the stupidest thing I've...oh, wait... sorry, force of habit.

NED: [DEADPAN] Understandable, given my usual brand of unbridled lunacy.

Panel 6: Closeup of Kelly looking upward in thought.

KELLY: Let's see, to imagine oneself as disparate individuals as a means of defining the forces which shape us.

Panel 7:

KELLY: Such a discipline might enable us to develop an expanded view of our selves and those

around us -- a 'bird's-eye' view.

Panel 8: Wider shot reveals Ned now doing a headstand on the ground beside the bench.

NED: Or how 'bout a 'foot's-eye' view to get
 to the bottom of things?

Panel 9: Closeup of a deadpan Kelly looking down in Ned's direction.

KELLY: Of course, we must also weigh in the
 distinct advantages in NOT thinking
 like someone else.